

Appl. No.: 10/016,693  
Amdt. dated: 4/24/2006  
Page 2  
Reply to Office Action mailed November 23, 2005

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims**

**Claim 1 (Currently Amended):** A process for forming vias in polymers with low dielectric constants, the process comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a substrate layer;
- (b) forming a lower level layer on said substrate layer, selected from one or more of the group consisting of dielectric, metal and circuit devices;
- (c) forming a seed layer on top of said lower level layer;
- (d) forming a lower metal layer on said seed layer;
- (e) forming at least one pair of spaced apart vias from a photoresist defining pillars on said lower metal layer;
- (f) plating said pillars ~~via~~ formed from photoresist defining at least one pair of plated pillars having top surfaces;
- (g) removing the seed player not under the lower metal layer;
- (h) coating said at least one pair of plated pillars and said seed layer with a low dielectric polymer so that it fills a volume defined by said at least one pair of vias, said lower metal layer and a level above said top surfaces of said vias thereby encasing said vias;
- (i) curing said polymer;
- (j) exposing said top surfaces of said plated pillars; and
- (k) forming a metal layer to contact said exposed top surfaces of said plated pillars.

**Claim 2 (Original):** The process as recited in claim 1, wherein said coating step comprises coating with a low dielectric planarizing polymer.

**Claim 3 (Previously Presented):** A process for forming vias in polymers with low dielectric constants, the process comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a substrate layer;

Appl. No.: 10/016,693  
Amtd. dated: 4/24/2006  
Page 3  
Reply to Office Action mailed November 23, 2005

(b) forming a lower level layer on said substrate layer, selected from one or more of the group consisting of dielectric, metal and circuit devices;

(c) forming a seed layer on top of said lower level layer;

(d) forming a lower metal layer on said seed layer;

(e) forming one or more vias from a photoresist on said lower metal layer;

(f) plating said vias formed from photoresist defining at least one pair of plated pillars having top surfaces;

(g) removing the seed player not under the lower metal layer;

(h) coating said one or more plated pillars and said seed layer with a low dielectric polymer

(i) curing said polymer;

(j) exposing said top surfaces of said plated pillars; and

(k) forming a metal layer to contact said exposed top surfaces of said plated pillars, wherein said coating step comprises coating with a low dielectric, non-planarizing polymer and forming a planarizing coating over said non-planarizing polymer.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The process as recited in claim 1, further including the step of applying a dielectric layer to said plated pillars and bottom metal layer before said low dielectric polymer coating is applied.

Claim 5 (Original): The process as recited in claim 4, wherein said step of applying a dielectric layer comprises applying  $\text{SiO}_2$ .

Claim 6 (Original): The process as recited in claim 4, wherein said step of applying a dielectric layer comprises applying  $\text{Si}_3\text{N}_4$ .

Claim 7 (Original): The process as recited in claim 1, wherein the step of coating comprises coating said one or more plated pillars and said lower metal layer with a silicon-based polymer.

Appl. No.: 10/016,693  
Amdt. dated: 4/24/2006  
Page 4  
Reply to Office Action mailed November 23, 2005

**Claim 8 (Original):** The process as recited in claim 7, wherein the step of coating said one or more plated pillars and said lower metal layer comprises coating with benzocyclobutene.

**Claim 9 (Original):** The process as recited in claim 7, wherein the step of coating said one or more plated pillars and lower metal layer comprises coating with polynorbornene.

**Claim 10 (Original):** The process as recited in claim 1, wherein said step of forming said one or more plated pillars includes a step (k) of utilizing a photoresist with a re-entrant profile.

**Claim 11 (Original):** The process as recited in claim 10, wherein step (k) comprises utilizing a negative i-line resist.

**Claim 12 (Original):** The process as recited in claim 10, wherein step (k) comprises utilizing a NH<sub>3</sub> image reversal of a positive photoresist.

**Claim 13 (Withdrawn):** A process for forming vias in polymers with low dielectric constants, the process comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a substrate layer;
- (b) forming a lower level layer on said substrate, selected from one or more of the group consisting of dielectric, metal and a circuit device;
- (c) forming a bottom metal layer on said lower level layer;
- (d) forming one or more pillars from a photoresist on said lower metal layer;
- (e) coating said one or more pillars with a low dielectric polymer coating;
- (f) curing said polymer;
- (g) etching back said polymer to expose said one or more pillars;
- (h) removing said one or more pillars to form vias; and
- (i) forming a metal layer to contact said bottom metal layer on top of said polymer coating.

**Claim 14 (Withdrawn):** The process as recited in claim 13, further including the steps of:

Appl. No.: 10/016,693

Amtd. dated: 4/24/2006

Page 5

Reply to Office Action mailed November 23, 2005

(j) forming a dielectric on top of said bottom metal layer and said lower level layer before said coating step; and

(k) removing said dielectric layer from said bottom metal layer before said metal layer is formed on top of said polymer coating.

Claim 15 (Withdrawn): The process as recited in claim 14, wherein said step of forming a dielectric comprises forming a  $\text{SiO}_2$  layer.

Claim 16 (Withdrawn): The process as recited in claim 14, wherein said step of forming a dielectric comprises forming a  $\text{Si}_3\text{N}_4$  layer.

Claim 17 (Withdrawn): The process as recited in claim 13, wherein said coating step comprises coating with a low dielectric planarizing polymer.

Claim 18 (Withdrawn): The process as recited in claim 13, wherein said coating step comprises coating with a low dielectric, non-planarizing polymer and forming a planarizing coating over said non-planarizing polymer.

Claim 19 (Withdrawn): The process as recited in claim 13, wherein the step of coating comprises coating said one or more photoresist pillars with a silicon-based polymer.

Claim 20 (Withdrawn): The process as recited in claim 19, wherein the step of coating said one or more photoresist pillars comprises coating with benzocyclobutene.

Claim 21 (Withdrawn): The process as recited in claim 19, wherein the step of coating said one or more photoresist pillars comprises coating with polynorbornene.

Claim 22 (Withdrawn): The process as recited in claim 13 wherein the step of forming one or more pillars includes a step (l) of utilizing a photoresist with a re-entrant profile.

Claim 23 (Withdrawn): The process as recited in claim 22, wherein step (l) comprises utilizing a negative i-line resist.

Claim 24 (Withdrawn): The process as recited in claim 22, wherein step (l) comprises utilizing a  $\text{NH}_3$  image reversal of a positive photoresist.